

Chairman and Members of the Committee, For the record my name is Linda Sandman. I am on my female partner's state health plan.

Providing equal benefits for domestic partners is only fair.

I've heard those opposed to gay marriage testify and make statements again and again that they do not want to discriminate in the workplace- it's just the religious sanctity of heterosexual marriage that they did not want changed. I'm here to hold those folks to that representation and respectfully ask that the sponsor, Senator McGee withdraw this discriminatory bill and if not, that those on this committee vote against it.

At least 15 other states already cover domestic partners. Those states are Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

Hundreds of local government cities and towns across the US also offer coverage. Passage of this bill will only result in the State having to defend protracted litigation that it cannot win and unnecessary costs for the State of Montana. Having this bill die now sends a message that the state is interested in keeping a diverse workforce and treating employees equally. Thank you for your time and consideration.

*in SB 255*

*Please vote no*

Linda Sandman

*Linda Sandman*